HNCA
RELAY TO VOA/EEB MUNICH
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SOVIET CITIZENS SEE THEIR LEADERS

ANNCR:

SOVIET TELEVISION HAS BEEN GIVING ITS OWN PICTURE OF THE SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS THAT DIFFERS IN SOME WAYS FROM THAT OF THE SOVIET PRESS. VOA CORRESPONDENT MARK HOPKINS SENDS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM MOSCOW.

VOICE:

MOSCOW TELEVISION ALONG WITH THE SOVIET PRINTED PRESS HAS BEEN REPORTING THIS TWO-WEEK CONGRESS WITH THE SPECIAL ATTENTION THAT MAJOR COMMUNIST PARTY EVENTS CAN SUMMON HERE. BUT WATCHING THE TELEVISION BROADCASTS HOUR AFTER HOUR, DAY AFTER DAY, THE POINT COMES HOME AGAIN... TELEVISION IS A DIFFERENT MEDIUM.

THE MAIN EFFECT IS TO SHOW THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV, PRESIDENT NICOLAE PODGORNY, PREMIER ALEXI KOSYGIN AND OTHERS OF THE TOP RANKS, IN A MORE PERSONAL WAY THAN THE SOVIET CITIZEN USUALLY SEES THEM. THE NEWSPAPERS HERE HEW TO THAT OLD SOVIET CUSTOM OF TOUCHING UP PHOTOGRAPHS TO MAKE SOVIET LEADERS LOOK MUCH YOUNGER THAN THEY ARE. THE NEWSPAPERS TAKE CARE TO PORTRAY THE LEADERSHIP AS EVER BUSINESSLIKE AND SERIOUS. BUT TELEVISION IS DIFFERENT. SECRETARY BREZHNEV AND OTHER SOVIET LEADERS HAVE BEEN SITTING IN THE KREMLIN PALACE OF CONGRESSES FOR LONG HOURS WHILE THE TELEVISION CAMERAS FOCUSED ON THEM AND NUMEROUS SPEAKERS AND ON THE SOME FIVE THOUSAND SOVIET PARTY MEMBERS AT THE CONGRESS.

A GOOD DEAL OF THE TIME, THE CONGRESS APPEARS WELL-ORGANIZED. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND THE DELEGATES SEEM AWARE MOST OF THE TIME THAT THEY ARE BEING TELEVISED. THE FACES ARE ATTENTIVE, APPLAUSE SEEMS TO START UP AS IF ON SIGNAL AND WHEN THE VOTES ARE TAKEN ON CONGRESS DECISIONS THE FIVE THOUSAND DELEGATES RAISE THEIR CREDENTIALS AS ONE. BUT THERE ARE MORE HUMAN GLIMPSES THROUGH THE TELEVISION CAMERAS. ONE CAN SEE A LITTLE BOREDOM AND FATIGUE PASS ACROSS FACES. VIEWERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE POLITBURO MEMBERS ON THE PODIUM IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS DURING THE SPEECHES. SOMETIMES THEIR APPLAUSE IS HEARTY, SOMETIMES PERFUNCTORY, SOMETIMES THEY ARE SERIOUS, SOMETIMES THEY LAUGH OVER PRIVATE JOKES.

SOVIET CITIZENS DON'T OFTEN SEE THEIR LEADERS IN SUCH A RELATIVELY SPONTANEOUS SETTING. THE SOVIET PRESS NEVER REPORTS ON THEIR PERSONAL LIVES, THEIR TASTES, HABITS OR FAMILIES, AND IT DOESN'T REVEAL VERY MUCH EITHER ABOUT THEIR WORK DAYS BEYOND OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUES ABOUT TRIPS AND MEETINGS. SO SOVIET TELEVISION HAS GIVEN SOME INTRIGUING GLIMPSES OF THESE MEN DURING THIS CONGRESS, THE MOST PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUAL PORTRAYALS THAT SOVIET CITIZENS EVER SEE.

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